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- High-schoolers hear meth message
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- Shoshone School District floats \$7.5M bond proposal

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FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

OUR VIEW: Schools need competent substitutes (Editorial)

Posted on: Thursday, October 02, 2008

Parents should be concerned about who is teaching their children.

They should be even more concerned if no one is available to teach them.

That occasionally happens in Palouse-area school districts due to a high demand placed upon a relatively small pool of substitute teachers.

Some school districts, including those in Pullman, Moscow and Palouse, have been forced to employ substitutes who don't have the necessary credentials to be full-time teachers.

That's not a bad option. The same thing happens all the time on college campuses.

Adjunct professors don't need anything beyond a bachelor's degree and proven expertise in their field of study to teach upper-level classes and are commonly employed by the University of Idaho and Washington State University.

Serving as an emergency sub requires a lot less than being an adjunct professor. For one thing, substitutes generally follow an ascribed lesson plan rather than develop a curriculum of their own.

Anyone with a bachelor's degree can apply for an Emergency Substitute Certificate from the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Last year more than 1,100 Emergency Substitute Teacher certifications were granted in the state, OSPI spokeswoman Shirley Skidmore said.

The Moscow School District announced at the beginning of the school year it will accept substitute teachers who hold a bachelor's degree from any college or university, and the Palouse School District is actively recruiting so-called emergency substitutes.

The Palouse district also has upped its substitute pay from \$85 to \$100 to offset the increased cost of traveling to and from the rural locale.

Districts face real challenges when it comes to finding enough substitutes to satisfy their needs.

Fortunately, area districts have found a creative solution to that particular problem.

- Doug Bauer, for the editorial board

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

High-schoolers hear meth message

One speaker says high and energy boost of drug counteracted by paranoia and hallucinations

By Brandon Macz

Friday, October 3, 2008

Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna speaks about methamphetamines during an assembly at Clarkston High School on Thursday.

Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna was at Clarkston High School on Thursday to warn students about the dangers of meth.

"Meth addiction results in a lot of the crimes that we see in the state," McKenna said. "This isn't a drug you can experiment with. It doesn't work that way."

The attorney general came to the high school at the request of two youth leaders with the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

Sophomores Sara King and Karlee Kirking are using the presentation given by McKenna and two presenters accompanying him as part of a competition with FCCLA, which presents youth awards based on criteria such as community service and dynamic leadership.

"We're going to try to incorporate prevention for our entire community," Kirking said. "You don't ever hear anything about meth. It's a good way to get that in their heads."

"My aunt had been on meth," King said. "Knowing what happened to her and hearing about (meth) at (a state conference), it was really, really powerful to me."

The assembly started with a presentation by Travis Talbot, a speaker for Lead On America, an organization working to educate community members on how they can assist law enforcement in winning the war on drugs.

Talbot warned students "there's just a little bit of truth" in what they've heard about meth as far as giving the user an "amazing" high, extra energy and its use as a dietary supplement.

While meth users may get an extra boost of energy, he said, there is little that can be accomplished by the user due to the paranoia the drug projects. One anecdote Talbot spoke of involved a woman who was found on her roof with a broom.

"She was scraping off the little green men who were trying to sneak into her house and steal her meth," he said.

The weight loss myth, he said, may come from how meth destroys a person's organs, causes them to pick hallucinated bugs from their skin and lose their teeth from smoking the drug.

As for the "high," he said, the first time a person uses meth will be the only time they truly feel that "high."

Following Talbot was Jamie Crawford, a former meth user who speaks to students in an attempt to prevent them from making the same mistakes she started making when she was 15 years old.

"From that first night, I loved it," she said, first trying it at a party.

Meth took her into a dark world, she said, where she witnessed a man getting a "finger cut off over a pack of cigarettes." By the time she was 17, she said she knew five people who had been murdered over meth and she knew the people who had committed the crimes. She said she couldn't tell anyone, because users like that would "kill you."

She would later be arrested after a high-speed chase.

"My first instinct was to run," she said. "You're so selfish when you're on meth."

After being given a "light" sentence of community service, Crawford said she went back to using, even smoking meth in a car with an 8-month-old child in the back seat.

"He was testing positive for meth," she said after her second arrest. "We were child abusers. We were making decisions for this child."

Crawford, now 23, is studying to become a nurse, and said she will continue to help McKenna and Talbot warn youth about the hold meth can have. After the assembly, she took a student aside to help her with a personal issue she had with the drug.

"This is a passion of mine," Crawford said. "I'll make up the schoolwork if I have to."

If only the UI treated its workers this way (Editorial)

Jim Fisher

Friday, October 3, 2008

Here's a piece of reassuring news out of Idaho's higher education system. Its latest addition, the College of Western Idaho, has agreed to let Boise State University employees whose jobs are being transferred to the new community college bring their vacation benefits with them.

And board members of the Boise Valley school made the decision for the best of reasons.

"The board felt it was the right thing to do," college President Dennis Griffin says.

That should help ease the anxiety teachers and others at what is now BSU's College of Applied Technology must feel as they find themselves required to move from one school to the other. The college - which teaches vocational skills in such fields as construction, horticulture and culinary arts - is being transferred as BSU sheds its former community college functions to focus on traditional academic pursuits.

The move was inevitable as the Boise Valley expanded in population and state-supported BSU, the former Boise Junior College, was burdened with serving as the region's community college as well as a growing urban university. The locally-supported CWI will now provide the kind of community college services found at the College of Southern Idaho at Twin Falls, North Idaho College at Coeur d'Alene and also at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, a hybrid of community college and four-year liberal arts college.

The College of Western Idaho will open in January with a \$12 million budget, \$5 million of which was appropriated by state legislators. Griffin says \$250,000 of the budget has been allocated to the cost of vacations for those former BSU employees whose benefit packages include annual leave.

Contrast that with recent moves by the state's oldest school of higher education to renege on benefit packages it offered to early retirees in 1999 and 2002.

In July, a lawsuit was filed on behalf of 268 former University of Idaho employees alleging the university broke its agreements with them for continued medical and life insurance coverage. One change, according to the suit, required retirees to choose between paying a monthly premium for the same health insurance coverage or to accept a plan with reduced benefits.

Considering that the UI offered the early retirement benefits as a way to save money, by replacing veteran workers with lower-paid new hires, its decision to squeeze additional savings out of people after they left the school's payroll was especially unseemly.

To put it in terms College of Western Idaho board members understand, and UI administrators and the State Board of Education should understand, it was not the right thing to do. - J.F.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

Shoshone School District floats \$7.5M bond proposal

By Ben Botkin

Times-News writer

With enrollment growing, Shoshone School District is floating a \$7.5 million bond issue proposal to voters on Nov. 4.

If approved, the bond will cover the cost of improvements and expansions to the district's school building, which serves students from kindergarten through high school. Now, the school - which opened in 1998 - is at capacity with about 600 students. The improvements from the bond issue would give the building room for growth and a capacity of 850 students, said Superintendent Mel Wiseman, adding that all the improvements would be used right away.

"We'll fill all the rooms," he said. "They won't be at capacity, but what we're putting in will be used."

Wiseman has seen enrollment grow at the district since 2004 from 506 students to 600-plus.

The improvements also will provide the space needed for the school's students to stay more within their age groups. There are three separate wings in the building for the junior high, high school and elementary students.

"We think we've come up with a plan," Wiseman said.

On the elementary wing of the building, the district would add about 11,000 square-feet with nine more rooms which would be used for classroom space and a music room.

Right now, there's one music room shared by elementary and secondary students.

Now, the school's gymnasium is a combination cafeteria and gym and school officials want to turn that space into a full-time cafeteria.

The school also wants to add a multipurpose room that can be used for a gym and performing arts.

The existing library would become an elementary library and computer lab, and secondary students would get a separate library as part of the plan.

The bond's money would also allow the district to create a spot for the buses to pick up elementary students closer to their classrooms. Students in all grades currently are dropped off at the same entrance.

Wiseman said the school board wanted to have the bond election on Nov. 4 to get plenty of community input when voters already are at the polls.

If the bond passes, Wiseman anticipates that all the improvements will be finished by the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

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FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

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